



Monson Free Library and Reading Room Association ~ Annual Report FY2015

"MFL...Going the Distance Since 1877"

Wow, what a year! It was a year of transition, changes and achievement.

First, let's start with our new team. Welcome back to me! I would like to thank the Board and the interview committee for selecting me as the new director in July 2014. I feel so fortunate to take the reins once again. The library continues to "go the distance" in enriching the Monson community and I am proud to be a part of this organization. It is truly great to be back home again. But the changes don't stop there. We have created a new team this year, some familiar faces and many new ones. Sandra Courtney has taken on the role of Youth Services Librarian with unprecedented enthusiasm and creative energy. In less than a year she has grown all-time high attendance records with her innovative ideas and programs. Diane Vacon is a new face at the circulation desk and Rebecca Paniagua has moved over to cataloging duties. The existing staff plus our new additions have worked tirelessly taking on new roles, learning new processes and coming together to create a strong new team that kept the momentum rolling all year.

Another way to keep the momentum is to receive a \$28,000 grant from the Osterman Family Foundation to "put the reading room back into the Monson Free Library and Reading Room Association". The existing reading room was repurposed into a new children's room during renovations after the tornado. This left a void in the choices adults and teens had to sit, work, and socialize. With the receipt of this grant we are able to renovate the old children's area into a comfortable, efficient and technology-friendly space that will incorporate soft seating, work tables, an enhanced local history area and plenty of room for the use and charging of laptops and other devices. This project is targeted for completion at the end of the 2015 calendar year.

And the excitement doesn't stop here. There were multiple improvements this year. The Board voted to replace the twenty-five year old boiler with two new efficient and redundant boilers that have already reduced our energy bills since installing them in January. This savings allowed the Sylvia DeSantis Community Room to be open year for community and library use. The past four years saw this resource closed during the winter months in an effort to reduce costs. We are pleased to be able to offer the use of this room to the community once again.

The Library Association also purchased the property at 85 Main Street, adjacent to the library. Options are still being considered for the removal of the house itself, but the property will be utilized to double our parking spaces and create an outdoor garden and program area.

Another major improvement was updating our technology, from replacing the server to installing new, fewer but stronger, wifi hotspots. All computers had the operating systems and security updated, three old computers were replaced, we installed a new switcher and improved memory in six laptops. These were much needed improvements to keep current and best serve our patrons that rely on our technology services.

Other service improvements were the addition of three new databases: Zinio (50 magazines on line), Mango (language learning) and Universal Class (over 500 professional development and

life-long learning courses). These new resources, along with the impressive list that we already offer allow the library to be virtually open 24/7. I am also pleased to announce that we reinstated our homebound delivery service, Library @ Your Door, a once per month program, delivering items to anyone unable to get to the library.

And you are wondering how can we do all this? Thanks to the town of Monson for supporting their library. At the Special Town Meeting in November 2014, the finance committee recommended and the town voted to add an additional \$15,000 to our budget. Other generous community partners include Monson Savings Bank, the Monson Arts Council and of course the Friends of the Library. The bank awarded the library \$500 as part of their Community Giving Initiative, the Arts Council donated the proceeds of their "Coffeehouse Unplugged" to us and the Friends....what can you say? They continue to support our efforts with the purchase of museum passes, baking sweet treats for our many events, and donating money and prizes to supplement many of our programs including summer reading.

Another avenue for funding includes our Annual Appeal campaign. This year we were successful in raising \$20,700 to aid in balancing our budget and funding special projects. This is \$6,195 over the campaign last year. I believe our residents and businesses can feel the momentum too!

Finally, thank you to the Board of Directors, the entire corporation and all the volunteers for supplementing our budget with your time and energy. Volunteers contributed 248 hours and at a library tech salary that translates into a savings of \$2,728. We appreciate the dedication of many that help us "go the distance".

Transition takes time and brings many changes, some are difficult, others exciting. It's a team effort to create change and I am so proud of the staff and all the support we have received from our community. Thanks for an exciting year and here's to going the distance for another 138 years!

Adult circulation: 28,959
Young adult / Juvenile: 17,481
Total Circulation: 46,440

Total Library Programs: 174
Total Program Attendance: 2,591

Hours Open: 1379
Card Holders: 4922
Volunteers: 48
Volunteer Hours: 248
Community Room / Library functions: 123
Community Room / Community functions: 48

Respectfully submitted,

Hope Bodwell
Library Director